



# Department of Justice

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## **APPEALS COURT AFFIRMS CONVICTION AND SENTENCE OF JACKSONS GAP MAN FOR DRUG CONSPIRACY AND DISTRIBUTION**

### **Drug Dealer Sentenced to 292 Months in Federal Prison**

**MONTGOMERY, ALABAMA**— On June 22, 2010, the Eleventh Circuit Court of Appeals affirmed the conviction and sentence of Willie Curry Johnson of Jacksons Gap, AL, for conspiracy to distribute crack cocaine, distribution of crack cocaine, and being a felon in possession of a firearm, U.S. Attorney Leura G. Canary announced today. Johnson was sentenced to a term of 292 months imprisonment in the Bureau of Prisons, 5 years Supervised release, and ordered to pay \$400 in court assessment fees.

The investigation of Johnson began in the fall of 2005 when the Tallapoosa County Narcotics Task Force received information that Johnson was using his home, and the homes of others, to receive cocaine powder, cook it into cocaine base, or crack cocaine, and sell it to others. In November and December of 2005, confidential informants working under the direction of task force officers, bought crack from Johnson on at least 3 occasions at his home. In October of 2007, investigators executed search warrants at Johnson's trailer and the trailer of his sister-in-law and found firearms and ammunition, powder cocaine, crack cocaine, marijuana, plastic sandwich bags with drug residue and scales. Johnson was arrested and confessed to possession of the drugs and firearms.

Despite confessing to possession of the drugs and firearms located during the search of the trailers, Johnson elected to proceed to trial after a federal grand jury indicted him on one count of conspiracy to distribute 50 grams or more of crack cocaine, three counts of distribution of 5 grams or more of cocaine base, and one count of being a felon in possession of a firearm.

At the conclusion of a week-long trial, a federal jury convicted Johnson of the conspiracy charge, two of the distribution charges and the single count of being a felon in possession of a firearm.

At sentencing, over the objection of the defendant, United States District Court Judge Mark E. Fuller determined that a sentence of 292 months was appropriate and reasonable due to the sufficiency of the evidence and the finding that Johnson was a leader, organizer in the drug conspiracy.

Tallapoosa County Sheriff Jimmy Abbett stated, "I would like to commend the Tallapoosa County Narcotic Task Force in their efforts in this investigation. They did an outstanding job in eliminating one of the major drug dealers in our county." Sheriff Abbett continued, "I would like to express my appreciation to the U.S. Attorney's Office for the Middle District of Alabama for their continued support to local law enforcement in prosecuting these type crimes in our area. The successful prosecution of Willie Curry Johnson and his sentence reinforce our commitment to the war on drugs in Tallapoosa County."

This case was investigated by the Tallapoosa County Narcotics Task Force, the Drug Enforcement Administration, and the Alabama Bureau of Investigation. The case was prosecuted by Assistant United States Attorneys Susan Redmond and Tommie Brown Hardwick. The conviction and sentence were defended on appeal by Assistant United States Attorney Jerusha Adams.